



How can I help my child at home?

Here are some ideas to help your child before he or she starts school.

- Read to your child or share books together.

Reading to babies and young children gives them a head start. Listening to stories helps children concentrate and to learn about books and reading. Try stories where sounds, words and phrases are repeated. Talk about the pictures or predict what might happen next in the story. Visit your local library - they often run events and activities.

- Sing nursery rhymes and songs.

These help children develop rhyme and rhythm and if your child knows some nursery rhymes before starting school they will be confident and able to join in with the others.

- Talk to your child and listen to your child.

Speaking and listening are essential skills for a child to develop. Good listening skills are closely linked with good learning skills and a good vocabulary will greatly aid your child when he/she begins to read and write. You can help your child by talking about the things they can see and do.

- Develop counting skills.

It helps if children can use some number names, identify what some numbers look like and are able to count everyday objects. Take opportunities during the day for simple counting activities or sing number rhymes. Play turn-taking games such as snakes and ladders.

- Matching and sorting games -for example pairing socks, Snap!, bingo using shapes, colours etc.

- 'Messy' activities e.g. sand, paint, water, mud, play-dough, collage.

- Play with your child.

'Let's pretend' is a favourite activity for all children - whether it involves pretending to drive a car, go shopping, going on an adventure or dressing up. Engaging in imaginative role-play enables children to explore and recreate experiences and develop language skills.

- Encourage them to mark make with various tools e.g. pens, pencils, paintbrushes, sticks, chalk etc in indoor and outdoor settings. To recognise and practise writing their own name, with a capital letter at the beginning and then using lower case letters. Write a shopping list together.

Self-help and independence skills

With your support at home, we will be encouraging the children to work towards these skills in school:

- being able to sit still and listen for a short period of time
- having respect for other people's property
- being able to take turns
- being able to tidy away after using toys, books or other classroom resources
- being able to put on their own coats and do up fastenings
- being able to use the toilet and wash their hands afterwards without help.